



Number Five

port Biographical Sketches

of some of Chicago's Early Settlers:

Part I.

S. LISLE SMITH,	GEORGE DAVIS,	Dr. PHILIP MAXWELL,
J. BROWN,	RICHARD L. WILSON,	Col. LEWIS C. KERCHIVAL,
H. P. HARRIS,	HENRY B. CLARKE,	Sheriff SAMUEL J. LOWE.



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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES
OF SOME OF THE
EARLY SETTLERS
OF THE
CITY OF CHICAGO.

PART I.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE following pages are intended merely as sketches of character—not labored biographies. In the inception, the object was simply to prepare a few newspaper articles, to be read and thrown aside, as other ephemeral literature. But partial, very likely over-partial, friends, who saw the earlier manuscripts, believed them worthy of a better fate—believed them (how could I question the verdict?) to be recollections of the fast-growing dim past, that should be garnered, and would be cordially received and valued by the olden-time citizens of Chicago. This being the case, and my friend of “auld lang syne”, Mr. Robert Fergus, having determined to give them the dignity of a book, no one can regret more sincerely than the writer that greater care was not taken in the preparation—that they were not given more at length—that more of birth and family had not been gathered. That would have made them interesting—to their descendants.

The general public, however, may fancy them as well in the present form. They, at least, care little or nothing where the accident of birth occurred, or whether the name of the father was John or Jehosaphat, and that of the mother Mary or Jerusha! They simply require a mental photograph of those who walked the streets when Chicago was a *terra incognita*,—who filled the places they now fill,—who passed through the same trials and had the same hopes and fears—the same clothing and passions of mortality. Birth or nation, we take it, has little to do with how each “acts his part.” It is the *man* only that survives—save with the loving hearts of kindred.

Of the *knowledge* of what I have feebly attempted, I was part of all. Though not among the earliest, yet I was an early citizen of the now famous “Garden City,” and my business was such as to throw me into intimate association with all classes, more than was generally the case, and the lines written upon the memory of the boy have not been obliterated from that of the gray-headed man any more than the city can be blotted from the map of the world,—such a thing could never be. Love for

INTRODUCTION.

those still living, and graves (may they be ever green ones) by the lake side forbid such a thing.

Of my *ability* to do justice to those who "have gone on before," I feel its want to the extreme, and, had I known what was to follow, would have burned the first pages of manuscript and shrank from the task,—what it was I realized too late. But one thing I do know—nothing untruthful, no single word of bitterness (no matter what might have occurred in other days, when hearts beat high and passions ran strong,) has been permitted to be here set down. Indeed, I can say—and that with my hand upon my heart—that nothing of the kind remains. Looking backward, one almost shudders as he learns that what he considered the fault of another was his own, and the blame rests upon his shoulders alone!

Chicago, it must be remembered, was a very different affair thirty and forty years ago from what it is now. Then everybody knew everybody, as in village society. Consequently, one could not but be familiar with the men who stood the highest in the community—with their acts as their faces—could not but be interwoven with them in daily life—could not but have stamped upon memory their individuality. Then, there were comparatively few who marked themselves above their fellows, and to forget them would be to forget, almost, one's self—and writing of them is as turning open the book of your own life.

It would be impossible for any to write of so long ago without having their statements questioned, and I do not expect to escape. Human memory at best is treacherous, and the same witnesses often look at the same transaction from a different standpoint. To anyone in the least familiar with courts of justice this explanation will be sufficient. To any others who may quibble, I can say, in all honesty, that any statement of fact made in these pages is a fact "according to the best of my information and belief," and that we may have looked at the same object at a different time or from an opposite side.

As to *opinions of character*, they are my own. Not a single person has made any suggestion—not one attempted the slightest influence. If I have erred in my judgment of men, I am alone responsible. My study of character may be wrong, but, as I have judged others, I am willing to be judged.

HON. S. LISLE SMITH.

There was no one better known to the "old citizens" of Chicago, nor justly more famous for brilliancy and innate kindness of heart, than SAMUEL LISLE SMITH—or, as he was familiarly called, "Lisle."

Gifted by nature far above the great majority of his fellows, with a rare education, striking ideality, and love and appreciation of the poetic and beautiful, with the most retentive of memories—one so marvelously perfect that he could quote the words, section, page, and book of almost anything he had ever read, and his simple *ipse dixit* would be taken as law in any court in the city—a natural as well as finely cultivated orator, he was, indeed, at the head of his compeers at least in that respect.

In stature, Mr. Smith was about medium size, with a slightly florid complexion, rather light hair, active in his movements, rapid as forcible in speech, graceful in every gesture, wonderful in imagery, the very soul of pathos, and could hold an audience spell-bound for any length of time, as was proven again and again.

As to his eloquence, the entire wisdom and the selected "best speakers" of the nation bowed unanimously to it, at the famous "Harbor and River Convention." Horace Greeley said he was "the star speaker of the vast assembly—stood without a rival," and the writer of this has often seen a letter from Henry Clay, avowing that he "was the best orator he had ever heard." Could better testimony be required to prove a fact? In short, Mr. Smith stood head and front above all he met at that time (as, indeed,

ing—remains of his speeches save a glowing, though sad, memory. The perfume of the rose lingers around the broken vase, but, alas! that is all,

“Appealing by the magic of *his* name,
To gentle feelings, and affections kept
Within the heart, like gold.”

Shortly after his death, his lifetime friend, RICHARD L. WILSON, (of the *Evening Journal*,)—another brave heart and true,—and others endeavored to obtain data for their publication, but nothing could be found. He never wrote a single word even of his greatest efforts. It was his custom, when preparing a speech, to walk up and down the shore of the lake, talking to himself—shaping the crude material into form, and, with the matter once fluxed in the subtle crucible of his brain, it was never forgotten.

In political life, he stood among the foremost, ever in the van: though never either asking or accepting an office when proffered, while working devotedly for his party and his friends. Of this let me give a single instance out of the multitude, one that will show more clearly the man than any words of my own could do. He was—could not conceal the fact—disappointed in the nomination of GENERAL TAYLOR, but when the old warrior was fairly in the field for the Presidency, he threw all his influence in his favor and did much towards securing his election. That accomplished, and the inauguration over, he visited Washington and paid his respects to the Chief Magistrate. Again and again he called, chatting interestingly, as he so well could do, and left without a word of business. Then he called yet once more, to say farewell, and as he was about leaving, the old war horse said, in his bluff and hearty way,

“Mr. Smith, I like you.”

“The admiration is more than mutual,” replied Lisle: “but why, General?”

“Because you are very different from anyone who has

called upon me. Everybody wants an office, and you have asked for nothing."

"And would not accept the highest in your gift."

"But can I do nothing for you, sir?"

"Nothing personally, but, if you please, General, it would be a great pleasure to me if you would appoint _____ Post Master at Chicago;" and he eloquently presented the claims of the candidate.

Need I say the appointment was made?

Were space permitted, I could fill pages with such pleasant memories of the man—memories that deserve to be perpetuated; but a brief notice is all that is permitted.

His political speeches were, truly, a power in the land. An old-line Whig of the strictest school, he loved—worshipped were, perhaps, the more fitting term—"Harry of the West," as he delighted to call Clay; and, probably, did more for his party than any of his time in Illinois. Right or wrong he carried his hearers with him, and spent his money freely in the cause. So much was he interested in the political struggles of the country that he gave up the practice of his profession (law) at an early day, though, had he been so disposed, he would have been without a rival as a jury lawyer—would have occupied the place at the Chicago Bar that James T. Brady occupied in New York.

In social intercourse, no man was (or is) to be found who could more charm or hold fast the attention. That this was the case, all who ever shared his open-handed hospitality, and that of his beautiful and accomplished wife, will attest. His conversation was of the character that made one a willing listener, and compelled regret when he had finished. for—

"On every point, in earnest or in jest,

His judgment, and his prudence, and his wit,
Were deemed the very touchstone and the test
Of what was proper, graceful, just, and fit."

This I saw proven again and again, even among strangers.

When the *first* "Sherman House" (created from the "City Hotel") was standing, Mr. Smith entered, one evening, with a friend, and their conversation drifted upon the life and character of Henry Clay. The reading-room was filled with men engaged with their own particular topics, but, as he enlarged upon his idea, everyone became silent, and remained so until a very late hour. Of that night I have a perfectly distinct recollection, and especially of the conclusion. The dust of the years that have fallen have failed to dim its individuality.

"I tell you," said the enthusiastic orator, "that Harry Clay will never die, but will be translated, like Elijah of old. When the Lord wants him, he will send down angels with a golden chariot, and one of them will tell his errand. 'Wait a moment,' will be the courteous reply, 'I must bid my wife farewell.' Entering the house, he will tell of the kingly summons, and say, 'Mary, I must go—farewell. Tell everyone that the Union must and shall be preserved,' and stepping into the heavenly car will be borne aloft from glory unto glory!"

I feel that I have failed in giving the beauty of his words—the sublimity of his imagery,—indeed I might as well attempt to chain a sunbeam. The hour and the "man eloquent," the burning eye, the wrapt face, the impassioned gestures—all are wanting—can never be reproduced. But this may give a feeble conception of the reality.

I think I am perfectly safe in asserting that Lisle Smith never had an enemy, even though far from faultless. But his errors never injured others. He was loved by the high and low, and the cold-blooded, cynical, and fault-finding dared not deny his greatness as an orator and his large-hearted and sympathetic liberality as a man. At his death one of the old and most striking landmarks was blotted out. He was a member of the "Old Settlers'" and many other societies, and was universally regretted. As far as I know his place has never been filled, and he who is worthy

to step in his shoes will, indeed, have a proud record. Ah! how many hearts beat sadly as the bell tolled for him, and how many trembling lips whispered, "Brave heart, true friend, hail and farewell."

GEORGE DAVIS.

The musical population of Chicago—*id est*, old Chicago—will remember, with feelings of pleasure as well as regret, the man whose name stands at the head of this brief biography.

Though English by the accident of birth, Mr. Davis came early to this country—was a thorough and patriotic American at heart, and his popularity enabled him to secure and long retain the office of County Clerk.

A "fellow of infinite jest," with a kind word and smile for everyone who approached him, he had troops of friends, who remained firm until the very last, and sorrowed truly when death called him hence;—but it could not have been to the land of silence, for from the choir of earth he must have been welcomed by the sweet singers above.

Mr. Davis was the prime mover in all charitable concerts, as he was the most noted leader of his time in the Episcopal Church (first Saint James', and, subsequently, Trinity), of which he was a member, and no entertainment of which vocal music was a part was complete without him. Though gifted with uncommon powers in rendering the plaintive (who does not remember the "Surf"? and how he would have given expression to "Annie Laurie"!) yet it was in the grotesque—the serio-comic—the broadly humorous—that his rare mimicry could best be brought

into play, and his facial expression used---that he most excelled, and will, perhaps, be the best remembered. There he stood, without a rival---if, indeed, any could be found in the "Garden City" at the present time.

Of this, I need but mention "The Great Mogul"—sung as it was by him—acted as it was by him—I think it has never been equalled upon the stage, and certainly not surpassed. Of course, there were many others, the words of which he himself set to music, that ever caused laughter, and never failed to "bring down the house," but the song I have mentioned was the most riotous in expression, although

"A merrier man,
Within the limits of becoming mirth,
I never spent an hour's talk withal."

Of the power exercised by his singing, I mention one striking instance, showing, as it does, not alone the charm of a rich and cultivated voice, but the respect and love in which he was held by the citizens—one so great as to subdue even the wild waves of land speculation and ever-grasping avarice—to make the might of Orpheus no fable and the lures of the Sirens no myth.

At the time of the sale of Canal lands and lots in September, 1848, Mr. Davis lived upon Canal Street, between Randolph and Madison, holding a *quasi* preëmption upon the lot on which his house was builded. The property was even then valuable, though the fabulous prices at which it has since been sold were never dreamed of, and many were anxious to purchase. The adjoining property had been disposed of at an extreme figure, and when the auctioneer (James A. Marshall) put up that particular lot, "George" trembled, for fear it would be run up beyond his ability to purchase. It was well known that he was not the possessor of a very bountiful supply of this world's goods (so liberal, so open-handed and open-hearted a man never could be), and he whispered his trouble to some of

his friends, and it instantly became known to the crowd, whose sympathy was not slow in being aroused. His bid (the valuation) was made and then a song was called for, and, mounting upon the top of an omnibus, he sang as, perhaps, he never did before, or after, in his life—sang with his whole heart, and eyes misty with gratitude. There was no bid against him—music carried the day, and, though David Leavitt (the President of the Canal Board) fumed, he was powerless to stem the tide of popular feeling, and was forced to see a valuable lot sacrificed for a merely nominal sum—in fact, sold for a song!

It may be urged that Chicago was young at that time—the people uncultivated, and not competent judges of music; but those who assert such a thing know little of what they are talking about, and are overwise in their own conceit. Ask anyone who lived then and is living now, and he will tell you that the amateur concerts of those days shame many of the professionals now; that Mrs. Harrington, Mrs. Dr. J. Jay Stuart, Henry Tucker, George Davis, “the sweet girl singer of St. James,” and others,* have never been surpassed for purity of voices and skill of execution. Ah! what a bright galaxy have passed away, and what an addition has been made to that matchless choir “whose strains are immortal and whose vibrations are eternal.”

Mr. Davis was essentially a social man, and one whose presence was ever felt, or missed. This was owing to his genial face, his ever-bubbling wit, and suave manners, as much as to his great musical ability, liberal charities, and warm friendship. No sorrow or want ever appealed to him in vain, and if it was little he could bestow, that little seemed to carry with it a blessing and a benediction. With his leaving Chicago (to settle in Detroit) one of the olden links was broken—one of the most familiar of the old faces

* Wm. M. Larrabee, Moss Botsford, Charles Collier, Augustus H. Burley, and Charles Burley.

gone; but those who remember the little, two-story brick building that stood upon the North-East corner of the Public Square, and was dignified with the title of "Court House," will rarely think of it without associating him with it—forming, as he did, the attraction for so many years.

Mr. Davis was, in the strongest meaning of the term, a friend; and, as far as my recollection serves, never had an enemy—save such as might have grown up from his fervent espousal of the case of the Rev. William F. Walker, in the then celebrated church trial, and of which it may be said, *en passant*, was bitter in the extreme,—long-continued—argued with great eloquence, but which left a baleful shadow over the congregation for a long time.*

He was of fine physique and presence and carriage, something of a *bon vivant* in his manner of living, and it was a matter of wonder that he did not take a place as speaker as well as singer, for certainly he had all the requisites—except, perhaps, assurance. But he loved "sweet melodies married to words," better than all else, and though there was much of the artist in his nature, and he sketched well, yet music absorbed all his spare time, and even trespassed upon the hours of business.

His name—the few thoughts here jotted down will re-open the pages of the past to those of the olden time, and his friends (and who were not?) will drop another tear upon his grave, and kindly brush the moss from the marble above it.

* The array of legal learning present it would be difficult to duplicate now, for in it were interested such men as Justin Butterfield, General James A. McDougall, Isaac N. Arnold, John J. Brown, and Patrick Ballingall.

PHILIP MAXWELL, M.D.

The Medical Faculty of Chicago would, and justly, deem themselves neglected if no mention was made of the Falstaff of the Profession who, to use one of his own arguments why he should be elected to the Legislature, "*carried weight with him!*"

In *physique*, at least, this was true. Dr. Maxwell was a man of more than ordinary stature and unctuousness; yet barely approximating to the gross. He carried his two hundred and eighty pounds very easily and gracefully, though that is more than could have been truly said of the favorite grey horse upon which he was accustomed to dash through the streets with all the *chic* and erectness of a soldier and the abandon and insouciance of an Indian. Indeed, so active and light were his movements, for one of his figure, that it was always a subject of remark, especially when mounting and dismounting. So, too, was it when he trippingly danced in those "good old days" when Chicago Society was a unit and unbroken by cliques—by the withdrawal of the *crème de la crème* from the "promiscuous gatherings," and the setting up for themselves of a standard blazoned with the motto "I am better than thou,"—a most sublime piece of egotism.

Of this permit a word.

The last general, free, and genial reunion of the votaries of Terpsichore was held at the "Sherman House," and (I think) known as the "Mechanics Ball." It was gotten up as an offset to that of the "Young Bachelors," a very select and (supposed to be) *recherché* affair, and the tickets placed at the merely nominal sum of one dollar, including car-

riages and refreshments. To carry out the intention of the originators (and who, by the way, had a large deficiency of funds to make up)—all prominent citizens were enlisted as managers, and a difficulty arose as to how they could be classed as Mechanics.

"Put down Doctor Maxwell as a Butcher," quoth Col. Swift.

"And Dick Swift as a Barber!" (*i. e.*, Money-lender—shaver) was the ready retort of the Physician.

In this way all trouble was overcome and the ball was large—immense, enthusiastic, and enjoyable. It was, however, the final gasp of general sociability, and the united Chicago of the old was known nevermore. But to return to the subject proper.

The face of Doctor Maxwell was in keeping with his ponderous frame. It was broad, massive, pleasant, and beaming with mirth—the last being the key-note of his character. It had, like his person Falstaffian breadth, and depth, and proportion. He was constantly upon the *qui vive* for objects of merriment, was a

"Rare compound of oddity, frolic, and fun,
Who relished a joke and rejoiced in a pun."

Even at the most solemn times it was next to impossible for him to keep the bubbles from rising to the surface—the gas of frivolity from escaping. Nature had cast him in the mould of "Sir John," and study and love of the character had perhaps tinged his own until it had grown to resemble the would-be lover of Madame Ford and "sweet Mistress Page."

I know such was the charge against him—that he ever aped the burly guzzler of sack and fancied himself the successful rival of the wonderful creation of Shakespeare. Granted that the charge was true, the idiosyncrasy was perfectly harmless. But the Doctor cared little for such insinuations, though he could be "testy" at times and

pour out the vials of his wrath like the bursting forth of a volcano. He was contented to go along "larding the lean earth," enjoying a laugh, no matter at whose expense, and making merry at life, come in what shape it might, though the sunshine and shadows in such lives are very marked. But, for the most part, he was remarkably genial,—feeling his own weaknesses as well as those of others; and, in his limited sphere, was a very "king of misrule." If he had made the peculiarities of Falstaff a study, and reproduced them in his daily walk and conversation, it was without malice to others—on the contrary, for their amusement.

As a rule, he carried sunshine in his face and heart and a quip upon the end of his tongue—was at his richest, when he could get a good joke upon his brother professors of the curative art—STUART, EGAN, AND ELDRIDGE—when firing double shotted guns and entire batteries at a time at the Faculty of Rush Medical College—and what stories the old wooden office in Clark Street could tell were speech given and had it not long since been dust and ashes.

Perhaps the highest relish of the Doctor was humbugging the credulous with Munchausen stories, equalling any of the "Fat Knight." Instances of this rise thickly as memory turns back to the man and the past is vividly pictured again. But one must suffice, though the temptation to fill pages is great:

On a bitter morning in early winter, he entered a hotel, drank a glass of water (he was habitually temperate), rubbed his hands complacently and discoursed pompously upon the merits of bathing.

"Surely," exclaimed one of the loungers around the glowing stove, "you have not been bathing this cold morning?"

"Of course I have—swimming. Sir, swimming," was the answer.

"Where Doctor?"

"In the lake."

"The lake? Impossible! It must be frozen along the shores."

"Yes—certainly—yes, but I make it a practice of going in every morning as long as my weight will break the ice;" and he departed leaving his hearers puzzled as to the truth of the story—and which did not contain a particle of it.

It was Doctor Maxwell who made the sweeping and far from complimentary criticism upon the late Edwin Forrest. Although already published let me introduce it here in brief:

The "great tragedian" was playing his first engagement in Chicago, had finished for the night, was going to his hotel down the street immediately preceded by the Doctor and his party. His opinion was asked and the answer given in such boisterous tones that Forrest could not fail to have heard it—"A brute force and native stupidity actor!" Whether just or not, it was his opinion, and the world was never kept in doubt as to what he thought.

There was much in the character and mannerism of Dr. Maxwell that reminds me very forcibly of the Lawrence Baythorn of Dicken's "Bleak House" more than Falstaff. There was the same bluff, hearty, brusque fashion of greeting—the same noisy explosions—the same extravagant expressions and denunciations—the same tremendous bursts of laughter—the same ferocious threatening—and the same tender heart breathing within the massive breast that would turn aside for fear of trampling on a worm, even while breathing tornadoes of wordy wrath and hurling wordy thunderbolts of wholesale destruction. But these things (when not uttered and acted in jest, as was frequently the case, served the more to clear the sky; and the man—whom a stranger might have looked upon as bloodthirsty—was as kind in reality, as incapable of doing harm as a child—a singular combination of Baythorn and Falstaff.

JOHN J. BROWN.

My introduction to the subject of this brief memoir was so peculiar and striking that it could not be forgotten, particularly when taken in connection with the man—one almost *sui generis*. It must have occurred very soon after his advent in the Garden City, for I had never seen or even heard of him.

I was returning late one evening from a visit to a sick friend. There was a wild storm abroad. Clouds were flying in tumultuous confusion, driven by the fierce North-wind; rain was falling heavily; the lake was lashed into foam and tossing in great billows upon the shore; the thunder was booming and crashing, and ever and anon the lightning played around with dazzling and fitful fury. It was not such a night as one would willingly be abroad, and I was breasting and struggling against the elemental war up Michigan Avenue, in the vicinity of Randolph Street, when a more than usually terrific burst of thunder caused me to pause—a vivid flash of lightning to glance anxiously around and I saw a man standing upon the lake-side of the Avenue gesticulating fiercely, and in the lull that followed, I could distinctly hear him talking to himself.

Curiosity could not be repressed. I fancied it must be one insane; and, forgetting the storm and darkness, the fearful pealing of the thunder, the rain, and the dangerous play of the lightning, I crossed and drew near to his side. And as I did so, there came to my ears the well-known words of Byron :

“The sky is changed! and such a change! Oh! night,
And storm and darkness, ye are wondrous strong,
Yet lovely in your strength, as in the light
Of a dark eye is woman! Far along,
From peak to peak, the rattling crags among
Leaps the live thunder! Not from one lone cloud,
But every mountain now hath found a tongue,
And Jura answers, through her misty shroud,
Back to the joyous Alps, who called to her aloud!”

Who could be quoting poetry at such a time and in such a situation? If curiosity had been aroused before, it stood toptoe'd now. I drew back, thrilling with a strange fear, and waited for the next flash to reveal form and feature. When it came, I looked upon a stranger who would have impressed himself upon any assembly. The picture rises before me now, weird almost as then, when the background was foaming and hissing waters, and black chaos of sky, and the shadows following the flashes eerie ones.

The figure was tall, angular, slightly bent, and wrapped in a cloak; the face sallow, somewhat hollow, with high cheek bones, and eyes deep set, heavily browed and lashed, and with more than usual power of focusing and penetrating. The head was held firmly, straight, defiantly, and covered with long, leonine hair, blown fitfully about by the wind. The voice sonorous and emphatic.

That man was John J. Brown, a newly arrived lawyer, as I came later to know, and the impression of him then received (almost boy as I was) without doubt ever after colored my view of his character, and something of it may linger even now, despite the dust and iconoclastic power of so many years.

John J. Brown was naturally a retiring, misanthropic man. The lenses through which he looked at life seemed to be ever clouded—the glimpses of sunshine rare. Whether his nature was naturally morbid—whether untoward circumstances had made it so, I never had the means of knowing; but that he was uncommonly shy and sensitive, and ever

looked at the darkest side, I am of opinion will not be questioned. He lacked, perhaps, the rebound, the recuperative power to recover from a blow or loss; and he made its sting deeper by brooding upon it. As a boy, I think this must have been the case—as a man, standing breast-high and proud-headed in genius, learning, and eloquence among his fellows it certainly was so; and none who knew him will deny the assertion. "*Knew him!*" I have said; but were there any who did so? I doubt it very much—doubt if he ever had any intimate associates—any to whom he fully unbosomed himself—to whom he revealed his inner heart and the motives that were the mainspring of his actions. And if the olden mythological fables had in them aught of truth, it was Pluto that hovered about his cradle, and Niobe and Melpomene that were his attendant spirits through life.

This gave a sombre coloring to almost his every act and thought. The shadows were so dense behind the sunrays that they could never be entirely hidden—the gold not sufficiently bright to effectually curtain the gloom. In all his forensic efforts this was apparent (at least to my mind), and the highest flights of fancy seemed to be made with wings against which beat the rain. But, notwithstanding this, they were of great power, legal acumen, and sound law. His mind in this respect was singularly critical and analytical. The very things that militated against general sociability and the power of self-forgetfulness—in drinking in the perfume of the flower, unmindful of the cruel thorn and poisoned root, gave him the more taste and ability for research—more concentration of mind upon the salient points he intuitively and keenly appreciated, and ever after retained; and this was so, not alone in the law, but in all he read—history, poetry, philosophy, theology—and the most apropos quotations were ever at his command.

I have spoken of his hair being long and tawny as the mane of a lion. It was so in fact, was very noticable and

first called attention. But it was his eyes that unwaveringly fixed it, for, at times, when his soul was fully aroused, they literally appeared to burn. I use the term advisedly, and can find none more appropriate. When indulging in his wonderful and bitter powers of sarcasm; when forgetful of self, and the ebb and flood of sorrowful waves, in the mastery of his subject—when all the shadows were exorcised, his eyes gleamed with a strange phosphorescent light and exerted a strong, subtle, magnetic power that was not to be resisted. In that respect, he was very like Rufus Choate, of whom it has been said, "*no one could report if they looked at him.*" The same thing was, in a great measure, true of John J. Brown, as I learned by experience when attempting to reproduce his words upon paper, during a celebrated trial. I watched the speaker and forgot pencil and paper!

Looking calmly back now, after a decade and more have passed, I am inclined to believe his greatest power was in scathing denunciation and intense bitterness. I would not be understood that such was the natural status of his mind, for I do not believe it. On the contrary, I had occasion to know that the milk of human kindness had not soured within his veins, and there was much of the gentleness and tenderness of woman in his composition. But he was undoubtedly the great master of withering and remorseless irony when aroused, of satirical and scornful gibe then at the Chicago Bar—of sarcasm that when given full rein had something almost sardonic in it. To this end, his vehement gestures, his eyes, his tall, flexible person, and his leonine hair, all added emphasis, and woe to those upon whom the razorlike edge of his tongue fell when unbridled.

Two particular instances drift up from the depths of memory. The first is that of the trial of Rev. Wm. F. Walker, elsewhere mentioned:

The opening of his speech was calm, graceful, even beautiful. He said, "I did not expect to be present at this trial. I thought the blue waves of the lake would have

rolled and sparkled between me and it." But as he progressed, as he fully gave himself up to the subject he warmed, grew deeper, stronger in thought, more forcible in imagery, his nerves quivered, his hair was disordered, and his eyes flashed as burning steel. Any looker on must have been reminded of the gathering and bursting of a storm. And when at its height it was terrible. When he pictured the manufacturing of the "patchwork slanders"—of those professing the broadest humanity and Christianity, coming "to the altar with the word of God in their hands and the devil in their hearts"—when he hurled wholesale scorn and infamy upon their heads—when he spoke of their "supreme and besotted ignorance and worse than heathenish bigotry" he rose to such an altitude of invective that few who had awakened his wrath could remain, and even the ordinary listener felt a shivering awe and dread.

The second time was in a strictly legal encounter, and with foemen worthy of his steel :

One of his antagonists he (figuratively) held up by his long hair, so that all could see him, and painted him in such colors as made even the fiends appear more just and pure—made him act the most vile monster possible with humanity—cut so deeply that the audience could not but pity. Turning from the fierce whirlwind of denunciation, he addressed the other in low and measured tones—reminded him of his position in the Church, and saying: "I have no words for him. The reproof must come from a higher source, even from the God he pretends to worship," he fixed him with his eyes, and opening a bible read the most bitterly appropriate chapter contained between its lids.

They had raised the lion, and having felt the full weight of his claws and power of his teeth, paid dearly for their attack.

I know it was customary to compare John J. Brown with Justin Butterfield in this respect, but I never thought the comparison tenable. Butterfield was a man of undoubted

power of retaliation, and legal knowledge, but he lacked (in my judgment) the keenness of Brown. Were I to indulge in a simile, I should say, that, while from his heavy blows he might have been Richard, his rival was the Saladin—the one would crush with a gigantic battle-axe, the other cut to the heart with a blade of Toledo temper.

As to legal requirements, John J. Brown stood high. His mind was a treasure-house as was shown during the brief time he taught a law school. Had his natural temperament been different—had his health been better—had life been more roseate, he would, as the years rolled on, have made for himself a high and honored name. But he never mingled much with his fellows; and it was only when interested and awakened in the argument of a case that he revealed what he truly was—only then that the shadow was ever lifted from heart and brain.

The particulars of his death were not familiar to me. I have a faint recollection of some mystery shrouding it—that his soul found the *Nepenthe*, the “surcease from sorrow” otherwise than surrounded by loving hearts. Be that as it might, his life appeared to be a fitful one, and May he sleep well! More sunny natures have gone before, and have followed him, but no stronger, no more legal, none more intense have taken their places in the green tent “whose curtains never outward swing.” Aye, and in the younger ranks of his profession who can claim the place he left vacant? When some one shall write at length the history of the Bar of Chicago, upon its highest page will be found the name of John J. Brown. Peace, eternal peace to his ashes.

RICHARD L. WILSON.

The name of Richard L. Wilson was so long and intimately connected with the *Chicago Journal* that it is familiar as "household words", not only to the olden time readers of that paper, but to all who dwelt in the City, County, and it might almost be said, State.

His personal popularity, as well as his political influence, was widespread and universally admitted, although it was an impossibility for any one occupying the position he held to be without enemies. Yet these came from tilts in the arena of politics far more (if not entirely) than any other cause. For what he thought right he labored manfully—wielded a caustic pen, and threw hot-shot directly into the camp of the enemy, regardless of the consequences. But it was the cause, not the individual, he would cripple—the batteries he would unmask and silence—the rifle-pits he would cause to surrender, not the men of which they were composed. He believed the salvation of the country depended upon Henry Clay and the Whig Party; and it would have been very difficult for a "trumpet-tongued angel" to have convinced him to the contrary, for his was a positive nature.

To those who stood out of the reach of the flying splinters and débris, it was amusing to see how he would demolish the long "leaders" of his antagonists with a few words. As a writer of short, pithy, pointed paragraphs I never knew his equal among the Chicago editorial fraternity. This was his forte, and in it he resembled PRENTICE, of the *Louisville Journal*, more than any other of his day.

If grape-shot, and canister, and shrapnel were fired by broadsides, he answered with a single shot from a well-aimed rifled gun, which caused more havoc than all their noise and wholesale missiles. "Grandpa Dutch" might fire column after column of "double-leaded" matter at his head, and "Dick" would send back three lines that would drive even "*Banks!* BANKS! BANKS!" from the brain of the old gentleman, for a time at least.

In this, more than any other way, he made his editorial power felt, though he was sometimes tempted to indulge in it to excess, with regard to the *Democrat*, and its elongated proprietor, and laughingly own that he might as well have attempted to perforate the thick skin of a rhinoceros with mustard seed. It was, however, a favorite pastime with all the knights of the quill of the day—did no harm—served as a "safety valve," and "Long John" continued to wax fat and rich and carry the Congressional district in his breeches pocket the same as before.

Save for these pointed squibs that generally pierced through the armor of his antagonist as if it had been but silken folds, Mr. Wilson (to the best of my knowledge) indulged but little in authorship, though famous for writing toasts, and good ones, for public dinners. The only instance of his "book making" that came under my observation was "*Short Ravelings from a Long Yarn*"—a story of Spanish life and adventure, and even that, I believe, was "licked into shape" by another. But Mr. Wilson furnished the data, supervised, and was entitled to the lion's share of the credit.

As I have already stated, long articles were not either his forte or his propensity. His spirit was too restless for such drudgery. It was with him aim and fire. He could not patiently still-hunt—could not follow a long trail Indian-like to secure a scalp. His nature was too ardent—he leaped over boundaries too rapidly for any such plodding, and if an enemy he was an open one. Every fibre of his

soul would have scorned lurking in ambush, striking without giving an opportunity of defense, stabbing from behind the back in the dark. Such things were altogether foreign to his nature. If impulsive he was honorable; if prone to criticise, just.

Of what his position would have been in the late unhappy fratricidal struggle no one who knew him will for a moment question. It could have been but one thing, and into the side he espoused he would have thrown himself body and soul. A divided country would never have been tolerated by him, even in thought. The Union, as he looked upon it, was ever to be a unit, and rested upon a foundation as lasting as time.

His patriotism was shown in the fatal rejoicing that crippled him for the remainder of his life. The news of the battle of Buena Vista, that sent an electric thrill through the land, stirred his breast to its lowest depths. He threw himself into the ranks of those who celebrated the victory—was the moving and master-spirit; but the premature explosion of the cannon used left a terrible personal record. And it showed, too, the iron nerve of the man—a will almost matchless in firmness—a scorn of physical suffering unparallelled—a power to endure that was beyond belief.

I was among the first to reach him, after the accident, having been a looker on at but a little distance. I helped to carry him into the Sherman House, and, consequently, know of what I write. To describe his injuries here would not only be useless, but create doubt. No one, who did not see him, would believe a man could be so mangled and live. It was a sight that made many a heart sick, and many a strong nature grow faint. This was the case with his regular physician. He attempted the necessary surgery, shook like an aspen, and was forced to give up the task to another. And during the lengthy ordeal, one of most terrible suffering, Mr. Wilson lay, with compressed lips—uttered no groan—never spoke of what he was so hero-

jically enduring, save once. As a large, ragged splinter of the ramrod was being removed from its place under and intertwined with the biceps muscles of the right arm, he said, in answer to a question of a friend: "Yes, that hurts." That was all; and, taken as a whole, it was a masterly instance of patient endurance—a literal triumph of mind over matter. And this same indomitable will and nerve enabled him to soon again resume his duties; but the injuries ever after affected him and sapped his life.

Mr. Wilson was a genial companion and a true friend, was liberal beyond his means when his sympathies were enlisted, and never stopped to coldly count the cost of a favor. There was nothing selfish or phlegmatic about him. Every action sprang from the dictates of a manly-beating heart, and the faults (if they can justly so be called) that always cling to such men were attributable to the mental combination—to the actual necessity of excitement and action—to the never letting "I dare not wait upon I would," to (in practical life at least) the Napoleonic motto that—"the end justifies the means"—to the more than usual social element—to a remarkably vivid appreciation of the humorous—to his peculiar surroundings—to the association into which he was forced—to the age in which he lived.

Sportsmen of the days of Richard L. Wilson will remember him with pleasure. He was a keen lover of the gun and skilful in its use. If prairie chickens arose within reasonable distance, it was bad for the chickens! Had his early life been different, he would have enjoyed, as only such enthusiasts can enjoy, living with nature in her wildest moods and made his mark as hunter, pioneer, even "Indian fighter," for fear was not a component part of his being. He was the life of the camp fire as he was foremost in quest of game, and though he never "strung rhymes" had much of the poetic, and saw all that was beautiful in sky, water, woodland, and treeless plain. Glimmerings of this crop out in the little book I have mentioned, and it was

when afar from the haunts of men that it shone the brightest, sparkled the most brilliantly, rather than when weary and chafed by the editorial harness. Then he gave loose rein to his thoughts, flung aside the rare power of condensation that made his newspaper paragraphs mosaics of terse pointedness—indulged freely in anecdote, and jest, and repartee—gave graphic descriptions of hunter's life that spiced to perfection the birds broiling upon the glowing coals. Then, also, he showed as he never did at any other time, the wealth of his imagination, the power (if trained) to throw off page after page of brilliant matter—to make a remarkably readable book. That he never did was often a wonder to his friends. It might have come with his years (if spared) had it not been for the accident that made penmanship severe labor, and despite his buoyant heart and resolute will must have left a legacy of shadows. That he did not is to be regretted. It could not have been otherwise than valuable and interesting.

Mr. Wilson was an ardent admirer of and believer in the destiny of Chicago. He always predicted for it a bright and glorious future, and he foresaw something of its greatness. Not all—perhaps not one tithe. Who could? There was no prophetic ken keen enough, no imagination sufficiently vivid to grasp the possibilities when the terrible baptism and purification of fire should have been perfect.

Any who foretold what would arise from the ashes would have been deemed insane. But the mind of Richard L. Wilson grasped much of what has been—what will yet be. He realized the importance of its geographical position—its immense business resources and activity, and that, sitting as it did, drinking in the commerce of the chain of lakes upon one side, and stretching out its broad arms of prairie upon the other, it must become great. And in every way he assisted to its present. This his paper enabled him to do—for this he labored in season and out of season—for this he created friends by his personal attractiveness—and

for this, if the departed have power to return to the earth and minister to the wants of the living, his loyal spirit yet lingers over the city of his love and haunts the inner shrine of the *Chicago Journal*.

LEWIS C. KERCHIVAL.

Probably, very few of the younger generation in Chicago have any distinct remembrance of Lewis C. Kerchival. But such as do must have been impressed by the striking points in a character that stood out strongly from his fellows.

The elder citizens—those who still linger in green old age and ripe usefulness, and it is to be hoped with plenty of this world's goods, after the great majority of their associates have passed away, will recall him as "Inspector of the Port" (with commerce that was a laughable burlesque upon the present), and later as Justice of the Peace, with an office in the second story of the tumble-down wooden tenement (Clark's Hardware Store), on the north-east corner of Lake and Clark Streets, and directly facing the famous "Saloon Building," a history of which would be a history of almost all the public meetings, and gatherings, and societies of early Chicago.

Lewis C. Kerchival rises before me to-day as distinct as when I used to meet him in the streets, straight as a pine, unbending as an oak, defiant and tough as a hickory; with his tall, muscular form, his grizzled hair, blue, brass-buttoned coat, and his soldier-like bearing, proud as Julius Cæsar and imperious as the Czar; always neatly dressed, with cleanly-shaved face and—a *rara avis* in those muddy times—well-polished boots.

Should I compare him with any other well-known character it would be Andrew Jackson. The mental calibre of the men, as well as their *physique*, was much the same. Each knew and did not shrink from "taking the responsibility" of any act they thought right—had no dread of, perhaps never even gave a thought to the consequences. The "by the Eternal" of the President was the animus of the citizen, and I often fancied (as did others) that they were very alike in looks.

The hair of Col. Kerchival was a true index of his character. It was kept cut short, and every "particular one" of the dense growth stood stiffly, savagely erect, without depending upon, and as if scorning the support of, the others; and had an individuality of its own—had a gladiatorial presence and a challenge to combat. So, too, was it with the man. He appeared to snuff the battle from afar, like an old war-horse, and had the most sublime contempt for those who did not agree with him. There was something grand in his attitude, whether right or wrong, though it is very much to be doubted if he ever admitted the possibility of the latter. That would have been a human weakness, of which he could never have believed himself guilty. What *he* thought and said *must be right*, and it was impudence of the most gross character in any to question. And if the disputant happened to be young! Ah! then Lear was rivalled. But his passion was like

"A full hot horse, who being allowed his way,
Self-mettle tires him."

And he soon became the calm gentleman again; for under all the heat there was a tender, almost womanly heart, and the eyes that one moment flashed baleful lightnings would the next be misty with genuine tears.

Of the more than iron will, memory will reproduce many examples to the minds of those no longer young, whose eyes kindly rest upon these pages. A few are so strikingly

characteristic of the man that I cannot refrain from giving them place. And I do so the more willingly as one instance proves beyond all cavil his inward, native goodness, no matter how warped at times, and a determination for the right.

The habits of Mr. Kerchival, in the matter of drinking, had not been good. It was the crying sin of the era—the most serious blight upon the escutcheon of the fair young City. His indulgences had grown upon him. Inebriety became the rule rather than the exception, and a speedy and dishonored grave appeared to be his inevitable doom, unless there was a radical change. And it came when least expected by his friends. He decided to drink no more—and instantly stopped. Severe sickness followed, as a natural sequence to the sudden lack of stimulant; and when a physician prescribed and held the “poisoned cup” to his lips, and told him he must drink if he would live, the old Roman dashed it aside, and vowed “he would die before he tasted a single drop”—and he kept his word.

Subsequently he became the president of the Temperance Society, and one night, when a meeting was in progress, some one brought forward a negro to sign the pledge, his face flamed with indignation, he declared the meeting adjourned, and rushed from the room. It was touching him in a very tender spot. His hatred for a colored person was too intense for him to admit the slightest association. Indeed, it was laughable how peculiarly sensitive he was upon the subject, and his loathing was so great that had he then (his views became somewhat softened at a later date) been convinced that that particular race would have been admitted into heaven, he would have considered it a good and sufficient reason and ample justification for going in the contrary direction.

The same imperative will—the same strong, overmastering prejudice controlled his judicial acts and legal decisions, even more than he was himself aware. Though I believe

him to have been honest to his heart's core, yet there was an irresistible bias that sometimes ran away with his better judgment, and bordered upon the ludicrous, and he made law quite a different affair from that laid down in the statute book and held to be sound by higher authority. I give an instance:

It was claimed, and justly, that active firemen were exempt from street tax, and custom, at least, had made it binding. But "Squire Kerchival" argued otherwise. He permitted a suit to be brought against one of the "fire fighters" for the amount, and sternly overruled the exemption. Then the defense produced three of the most prominent physicians, who swore point blank, that on account of bodily injuries, the defendant was not able to work upon the streets and consequently not liable. There was nothing in rebuttal. But "the Squire" ignored the testimony entirely. He had made up his mind and that was sufficient—said "he had seen the defendant dance half the night, and any one who was able to dance was able to work on the streets, and he'd be (well, say blessed!) if he shouldn't either do it or pay!"—vowed he wouldn't permit an appeal, and forthwith issued an execution.

But nothing came of it; and his books, if now to be found, will reveal the judgment unsatisfied. Sober second-thought had shown him the impracticability and absurdity of his course, and I presume he laughed as heartily as did others at his high-handed defiance of law and testimony. It was simply one of the furious storms that the soonest clear the sky.

Next to, if not equal with his hatred of "our brothers carved in ebony" was that of dogs. He had the most mortal antipathy to them. They never entered into his conception of Paradise. In that particular, if in no other, he was "close communion," and would have cut off the best of his friends among the Red Men from the happy hunting-grounds, for their love of and close intimacy with their use-

ful four-footed companions. This feeling was no secret, and it was made use of to annoy the old gentleman, though truth to tell more from the fun that would arise out of it than malice.

The prime mover was Doctor —— (he might not fancy having his name given to the public, so I'll e'en whisper it very lowly and confidentially upon the solemn pledge that you'll "never tell nobody") — Doctor Max Myers. He caused an advertisement to be inserted in one of the papers, that Squire Kerchival was very anxious to purchase a good dog, and requested any who had one for sale to bring it to his office between the hours of nine and twelve upon the following day. And such a collection as appeared, *mirabile dictu!* Dutch men, and dutch women, and dutch girls, and dutch boys from the neighborhood of "Lill's Brewery"; Milesian men, women, girls, and boys from the North, South, East, and West. and ragged juveniles from every alley. And dogs? No race appeared unrepresented. The "School Section" (old settlers will understand the meaning of the term) were in full force, terriers, Newfoundland, pointers, setters, hounds, bulldogs, "Tray, Blanche, and Sweetheart," big, little, useful, worthless were all there, and the office was taken by storm, and the street crowded, and a human and canine Babel reigned and Bedlam was outdone!

But the reception they received! It beggars all the power of description, let imagination run riot ever so madly; the motley crowd was hurried, driven, hustled, not very gently, down the stairs amid the wildest jargon and carnival of denunciation, and curses, and vows of vengeance from Teutonic, Irish and—that was the feather that crushed the spine of the camel—colored lips; the door locked, and the scales of Justice that day left untended. And "wrathy" indeed was the Squire when he found it was a practical joke—blew hot and blew cold—but when the waves had lashed their fury out he bore no malice.

Despite his peppery temper, Lewis C. Kerchival—Colonel Kerchival—was a man to be respected. None of us are without faults, and his came from natural organization—from the want perhaps of proper training when young—from his head rather than heart. He was of the *ancient régime*—had the manners of a “gentleman of the old school”—the will that would have caused him to march triumphantly to the stake for a principle, and the nerve to endure torture without a groan. He was as much a part of his times as the buildings—has left a name that is indissolubly connected with Chicago—was true as steel in his friendships and when the sod was placed over him, many of what the world called “better men” would have been less missed.

URIAH P. HARRIS.

Nature created Uriah P. Harris for a fireman, and I am inclined to the belief that his playthings in the cradle must have been miniature trumpets, spanners, and wrenches, and that the first use he made of his limbs was to “run with the machine,” and of his hands, to hold a pipe and a butt! This may seem an idle delusion of the fancy, but the after-life of the man would appear to prove the theory.

Mr. Harris, I am quite confident, owed his nativity to New York City. During his younger days he was a member, and we may be certain an active one, of engine number 27, “Old North River,” and in the rough school of the Volunteer department, the constant calls for energy and courage, and the not unfrequent difficulties with rival companies, he learned, and learned well, the stern lessons that fitted him for his after career.

Upon his arrival in Chicago, he joined "Osceola, number 3," then having a house upon the river bank on the north side, at the foot of Dearborn Street—the "Kid Glove Company," as its enemies dubbed it. It was composed for the most part of the "solid men" of the North Division (with a few from the South side), and represented much wealth, and the very first of social standing; a distinctive feature it retained in a great degree to the very last, although the first members bore away the palm in these respects, and the names to be found upon its (then) roll stood and stand to-day as high as any in the city, and the paid department do no more severe work than was done by the "hand engines" then—if they equal it.

The coolness, the power to control and direct others, the far-sightedness, the quickness of decision, the knowledge of the fantastic moods of the flames, the scope and force of water, the best point of attack, the surest way to defeat, all belonged to Mr. Harris, and he was dowered with the strength and stamina to defy the excesses of heat, and cold, and exposure, inseparable to such a life.

All will remember him, for he was a part of the new as well as the old Chicago. His figure was tall and presence commanding—a shade too heavy in his later years for the arduous duty, but never shirking it. The strongest, the absorbing passion of his life was to be a fireman. It was his *beau idéal* of perfect manhood—the achme of human bliss—the highest aim of his ambition. No general ever felt more happy than he in marshalling his forces against the "devouring element"—none were more jubilant in victory.

But it must be remembered that his was no common conception of what constituted a true fireman. It had been the study of his lifetime—he had consecrated himself to it, as it were, and the one who reached his mark had to combine all the elements of daring, even to recklessness, coolness, amid the most trying circumstances, trained judgment, a quick eye, a firm hand, untiring muscle, an iron

constitution, to know by intuition what was right, and the nerve to carry it out, unheeding the clamor of the populace or the intermeddling of those who held *quasi* power in municipal affairs.

That Uriah P. Harris combined in a remarkable degree these rare qualities, his repeated election to the office of Chief Engineer (and no more important one can be adduced). I think, conclusively proves. In this even the outcry of party was strangled, and though there were plenty of seekers after the "loaves and fishes" connected with it, yet to the praise of Chicago be it recorded, the better judgment permitted no swelling and fury of political waves to turn them from what was believed their best interests and the most certain means of safety. The fiat was then, whatever it may be now, that life and property, when weighed against fire, was above and paramount to all party feeling.

I think, none will question the ability with which Mr. Harris managed fires. And it must be taken into consideration, how often and much he was crippled for want of necessary machines and an adequate supply of water. Human muscle is not as tireless as steam, human nature not as reliable as steel, human passions have no safety-valve that can be chained down and control them, humanity is ever subject to the overthrowing powers of jealousy, envy, malice, and insubordination. And all these were against him, at least in the early part of his career, and I remember well a remark from his lips, when the change came from the Volunteer department and breath of fire, lungs of steam and sinews of iron were substituted; when horses did the heavy labor of drawing and machinery of working—when men arrived at the scene of destruction without being already tired out.

"I tell you," he said, "steamers don't get exhausted or drunk, and can be depended on every time."

This was immediately after what was then termed "a great fire" (ah! how fearfully the memory of it was blotted out at a later day, when a second Sodom swept away acres

of buildings, and in a breath crumbled even the most substantial to ashes or melted them as wax in a thrice-heated furnace!) in Lake street (on the north side of the street between Clark and Dearborn), when tired nature strove to sustain itself by stimulants, and there was left behind a sad, sad record of destruction and death—heavy pecuniary losses and monumental marbles in the graveyard.

Mr. Harris was a man of intense feelings and strong passions. They were the requisite fuel to drive him on in his chosen career, just as much as coal and wood are to the locomotive. Without them he could never have been what he was. But passion with him was no long-lingering feeling. It would have been impossible for him to have “nursed wrath to keep it warm.” He was too great-hearted for that. Beside his inherent love of mirth—his rollicking nature would never have permitted such a thing. His laugh was most hearty and contagious; his play boisterous, and the very corner-stone of his being was sociability. Condemned to a hermit life—sundered from genial companionship, he would have been the most unhappy of mortals and not long known to the living. As a Crusoe, he would not have survived to see a “Friday,” whether day or man! Generous he was to a fault—far too much so for his own good in a pecuniary point, and was something of a *gourmand* in eating, while exceedingly dainty in taste and not to be charged with gluttony. Like many men of his mould, he was tender-hearted—unusually so. Charity with him was more than a name—was not simply a spasm, but an ever-living and breathing reality, and tears in the eyes of woman, no matter who she might be, ever caused his own to flow.

Mr. Harris was perhaps too much of the order of *Sans Souci*, to have claimed the motto of Bayard, but to that can be attributed much of the personal popularity which, in connection with his ability in his chosen profession, enabled him so long to retain his high position as Chief.

His friends were very warm and lasting ones. He threw his whole soul into his intercourse, as indeed he did into everything else—was fond even to extremes of the amusements that go very far toward relieving the dullness of life—to compensate for its trials. A good horse had in him a good friend and protector, and the drama an ardent admirer. Indeed he was enthusiastic concerning it, and chess might almost have been called a passion. And, though the fact is probably not widely known, he was quite literary in his tastes.

His faults, whatever they may have been, sprang from an excess of warmth in his nature, from too much carbonic acid, I might say, in his organization, from impulse not to be resisted, from the whip and spur of too rapidly bounding blood—never from premeditated wrong. No one ever yet heard so hearty and spontaneous a laugh come from a villain's throat.

But whatever his errors, the mantle of that broad charity, with which he ever so liberally shrouded others, should be extended to him. His virtues counterbalance them, and it has been well written, "none are perfect, no not one." He has passed "beneath the veil," but will not soon be forgotten—cannot be. As long as there is a Chicago Fire Department, he will be remembered with pleasure. What it now is (without detracting one iota from the fame of others), he assisted greatly to make it, and no true fireman will hesitate to lay a wreath of asphodel upon his resting place.

HENRY B. CLARKE.

No one among the olden time hunters will ever pass the grave of Henry B. Clarke save reverently and with uncovered head.

Mr. Clarke was, *de facto*, one of the "old settlers." About forty years ago he erected his (then) famous mansion, dwarfing all others, on the South side of the river, and equalled only by that of William B. Ogden on the north—of which it was the rival. Its cost was some ten thousand dollars—a mere bagatelle now, but at the time was looked upon with alarm. and designated by many names, the most gentle of which was, perhaps, "folly." The building was fashioned after, and to a great degree a reproduction of, that of the first Mayor of Chicago (William B. Ogden, A.D. 1837), with broad, pillared porch; inviting, comfortable, substantial, and a marked object in the almost wilderness of prairie.

One can scarcely conceive, at this day, the enterprise and energy necessary to successfully carry out such an undertaking, when the city was yet in its swaddling clothes (with only about two thousand inhabitants), the country unsettled, the trail of the Indians yet unobliterated, their corn growing at "Wolf's Point," their camp fires nightly burning, and their war cry scarcely stilled; when skilled labor was difficult to command, and when much of the interior wood-work had to be transported from the State of New York. Indeed, everything taken into consideration, it might well have been looked upon as Herculeanean labor, and one bordering even upon insanity. But the South side

gloried in it, as they did in everything that tended, in the least, to break the somewhat arrogant power of the North, and lessen its prestige.

When Mr. Clarke builded his home it fronted to the East, and was sentinelled by tall Lombardy poplars—striking objects amid such surroundings. It was distant a mile and one-half from the nearest neighbor, was in a streetless plain, and to be reached only by the road along the lake shore—the highway from the Wabash. And it is recorded as an instance of his goodness of heart, and thoughtfulness for the welfare of others, that he every night hung out a lantern to guide belated and perplexed travellers, and save them from the treacherous and almost bottomless sloughs.

The location of the house was near the scene—a trifle to the south, if I remember correctly—of the massacre of 1812, and amid the mimic mountains of ever-shifting sand rested the bones of the soldiers ruthlessly slain by Indian treachery and—why should it not be written?—by the obstinacy and incompetency of white leaders.

Not here, perhaps, is the proper place to discuss the merits of that fatal evacuation of Fort Dearborn; but a decade and a half of years since investigation of the facts (after gathering the most authentic information possible) forced this conclusion: the massacre was the result of self-opinion, suspicion, and jealousy of inferiors, the destruction of stores, the want of knowledge of the Indian character and contempt of their power. But whatever the cause, its history was written in blood.

Mr. Clarke combined shrewdness with energy of character. He was a partner of William Jones and Byram King (notable names in the early history of the Garden City) in the Hardware business (on South Water Street), and a director in the Chicago Branch of the State Bank. In his later years he withdrew from active business associations, and devoted his time to the cultivation of the soil and to the sport his very soul loved—that of hunting; having

for companions such men as D. D. Stanton, Harvey Blakesley, L. C. Hugunin ("Len"), Ashley Gilbert, and others.

Judging from his treatment of me, and from what I heard from others, Mr. Clarke must have been a remarkably genial companion—one with command of self and one possessing the traits of character that make men loved while living, and when gone, remembered with tender regret. Certainly his friends were warm ones, though I fancy the number admitted to the very hearth-stone of his heart was not large. But those who enjoyed the privilege remained firm to the last—till, in 1849, the blight and mildew and doom of cholera fell upon the the City and swept him away.

He was a man of strong feelings, and remembered injustice very keenly. His early life had been passed amid the scenes that most truly "tried men's souls," for the business battle of those years was not what it is now—the means of transportation but as a pony express to the countless railway cars—or, as the speed of a tortoise to that of a greyhound. Money was scarce and hard to command; credit sat weeping amid the ruined altars of speculation, and when the crash of 1837 came, Mr. Clarke did not escape being crippled. This, and subsequent struggles, I think, must have somewhat distilled the gall of bitterness into his cup of life, and ever after shadowed it. But he was the possessor of a brave heart and high moral courage. The latter was shown upon his death-bed. He calmly faced the inevitable, gave minute directions about his temporal affairs, and designated the spot of his burial—that he should be placed beneath a spreading tree upon his own ground, and not consigned to the cheerless graveyard where the drifting sand hid all trace one day, and the next permitted the wind to blow upon the unearthed coffin!

I know not if tree or grave remains now, so completely has the city swallowed up the surroundings—so much has

the vandal hand of "improvement" obliterated old and cherished land-marks. But I do know that in former days the grave of Henry B. Clarke was held in reverence by old settlers and huntsmen, and each in passing laid (at least mentally) a flower upon the grassy mound.

No man in whom the love of dogs and horses is as strongly developed, as was the case in Mr. Clarke, can ever be otherwise than warm-hearted and full of tenderness; but if, at times, bitterness fell from his lips, it was but the natural out-cropping of the trials through which he had passed. But it was a growth of tares that could never uproot the wheat—of weeds that were held in check by blossoms of humanity. Had he been thrown upon the extreme frontier he would have been foremost in the ranks of pioneers; had he been with Boone and Simon Kenton they would have had a brother who would have won an equal name, and never shirked trial or flinched danger. If more lapped in City life he would have sighed for gun and for freedom, and the leaves of the ledger would be irksome, no matter what the profits. As it was, his later life was a happy medium between the two extremes. He lived upon neutral ground between civilization and wilderness—could turn in a moment from one to the other, and when not actually engaged in agriculture his face was more often seen at the Calumet and the O'Plain than in Lake Street, and his gun more often heard on prairie and river than his voice upon the public square. For all his ambition in house-building he loved nature, primeval, better than right-angled streets and piles of brick and mortar; and believing, to the full, in the creed that "God made the country and man made the town," he gladly turned his back upon

"The cold, heartless city, with its forms
'And dull routine; its artificial manners,
And arbitrary rules; its cheerless pleasures,
And mirthless masquing."

Mr. Clarke belonged to the "old stock" that are rapidly fading away from the sight of men—but not to be forgotten. That can never be. Their names are written as with pencils of steel upon tablets of marble—written upon all of Chicago as indelibly as those of the Indians are upon headland, river, prairie, and waterfall. Every thought of the past brings them back—repeoples the earth again with the forms long since laid down to their silent rest. A few—a very few remain, with the furrows plowed by years upon their faces, and "the snow that falls but never melts" lodged in their scant hair; and it is a duty, as it should be a pleasure, not only for their children and children's children, but of all in Chicago to gather and garner all possible reminiscences against the time when their history will be more valuable than letters of gold.

There was a manliness about these old Argonauts—a self-dependence, an iron nerve, and unbending front of which we see but little now. Perhaps it is not called out. They were men to be relied on in every emergency, and among them Henry B. Clarke stood high-placed, and, as far as I ever knew, with unsullied character. He never (to the best of my recollection) sought or held public office—a striking commentary upon some that might be named, and on that very account left a purer record. He never could have been a sycophant for place or power—a Janus for loaves and fishes; and while he might, by so doing, have left more property, what he did was unmortgaged to political corruption and broken promises. From his life and those who stood shoulder to shoulder with him in the ranks, the "rings" of to-day may learn a lesson it would be for their benefit to ponder and remember, if they aim for a higher and nobler manhood. Aye, it would be well for the younger business men of Chicago to go to such graves as that of Henry B. Clarke and learn wisdom from their dust and ashes.

SAMUEL J. LOWE.

In the first Directory of Chicago (*Robert Fergus. Compiler and Publisher, A.D. 1839*), can be found the name of Samuel J. Lowe, "High Constable and Deputy-Sheriff," showing that he was a resident at an early day, but I have no means of deciding the exact time. He was twice elected Sheriff (1842 and 1844), and subsequently Justice of the Peace, an office, I think, he held at the time of his decease. He was twice married, and a number of his children still survive.

Mr. Lowe was of English parentage—and he was born, if recollection serves me rightly, in the mother country; and, though thoroughly Americanized in feelings, retained some of the traits that mark the subjects of Queen Victoria to the end. This, however, was only in manner, accent, and idiom. There was nothing of worship for the crown remaining. And—if indeed he had ever been much tinctured in that direction, which is exceedingly doubtful in my mind—all of early prejudice, and love, and reverence for royalty had been obliterated. He was a democrat at heart as well as in name—a strong partisan; and the "divine right," according to his belief, was vested in the people and not in kings—the *vox populi* paramount to the single will of man or woman. In fact he had little patience with any who boasted the superiority of England in any respect, and could scarcely tolerate them at his own table, although one of the most hospitable of men.

One instance of this came under my own immediate observation.

He, like all Englishmen (and are not, "Yankees" the same if blessed with the slightest epicurean taste?) was fond of roast beef, and he was a good judge of the article in its primitive state, and knew when it was properly cooked. At dinner one day, at his house, were some genuine specimens of the newly arrived John Bull—sex, masculine; species, cockney—who, ignoring the etiquette and politeness of the occasion, indulged in egotistical bombast as to their native country, and were loud in condemnation of everything this side of the water. Mr. Lowe heard them in silence, though rising color told how unpalatable was the theme to him. Under other circumstances he might not have borne so patiently. In the role of host he was fettered, and endeavored again and again to turn the tide of conversation, but without success. And everything came in for censure, from the President and Cabinet down even to food, and the wholesale declaration was made (and that in the face of as prime a piece of beef as Straun ever fed and "Bill Gallagher" ever butchered, and which it would have been very difficult to duplicate in any market in the world) "that there was nothing fit to heat in this 'ere blarsted country," or words to that effect.

Quick almost as a lightning flash the hot blood surged to the very temples of Mr. Lowe. Not only his adopted country, but himself and his table, had been insulted, and by those partaking of his kindly proffered hospitality; and before second-thought came to his rescue he answered and asked: "Why, then, in the name of heaven, didn't you stay in England?"

That he regretted it afterward I know, although the reproof was richly merited, and he felt he had lowered himself to their level. However it mattered little. They were too thick-skinned to feel his virtuous indignation, and if the shaft was felt at all, consoled themselves with a double allowance of the beef that "was not fit to eat," and which was such a toothsome morsel as they had, probably, never tasted upon before in their lives.

And here (though out of place) I cannot refrain from introducing an anecdote of Henry G. Hubbard, as it bears directly upon the subject—he sharing with Mr. Lowe his disgust of such ill-breeding and ignorant assumption, and especially as it was first told me by the latter.

Mr. H. G. Hubbard was dining at the City Hotel (transformed from stores by the Hon. Francis C. Sherman “because they were built too far from trade!” and subsequently rebuilt and rebaptised as the “Sherman House”) with some of his friends, when a party of English (not English gentlemen and ladies—very far from it) who were seated opposite indulged in loud-mouthed vituperation of all things American. Mr. Hubbard listened quietly for a time and then with straight face, but eyes twinkling with mischief, began to describe to one of his friends (but intended for other ears) the severe trials of the early settlers of Chicago—how they had to go out upon the prairie, and dig under the snow for old buffalo bones, left by the Indians the previous summer, to make soup to sustain their lives, and much more to the same effect.

“‘Orrible! ’orrible!’” was the comment of the foreigners.

Mr. Hubbard seeing that the bait had been swallowed, enlarged his stories, and as the vulgarity of “Western people” had been harped upon, wound up by calling aloud to the waiter who was serving pudding:

“Here, bring me about a quart of that poultice and put on plenty of the ointment!”

That was enough for John Bull. They left in a hurry, and Chicago, as reported by them, must have had a hard name. But could they have heard the explosions of laughter that followed, and have known Henry G. Hubbard as did the others at the table, they might have been a trifle sceptical as to the information they had put down as “perfectly reliable!”

That Mr. Lowe possessed more than usual qualifications for Sheriff will not be questioned by any one familiar with

his character. He had firmness, coolness under the most trying circumstances, a quick, working, and decisive mind; was fertile in expedients and endowed with honesty that nothing could shake.

If specific proof of the latter were needed it could be found in his being among the first, if not the very first, selected to guard the specie while in *transitu* from the Government Land Office at Chicago to St. Louis. Of the danger, as well as the responsibility of the undertaking, at such an early day, when the means of conveyance was simply stage coaches, often floundering through muddy prairie and "stuck" in muddy sloughs, those living in Illinois at the time will need no testimony. Organized bands of counterfeiters, horse thieves, and desperate men, versed in crime of every character, abounded. The "Regulators" had at best been only "scotched," not killed. For every head of the serpent crushed another was reared. The "Davenport murderers" were in their glory—the "Driscolls" flourishing and banded for evil with their brothers in infamy throughout the wide west. Every grove from Inlet and Paw Paw to the Wabash might have been said to contain *caches* of stolen goods and horses, the cellar of many a tavern, the bones of murdered men, and the "Hubbard Trail" was not unmarked by blood. In every respect it needed men of inflexible nerve and the most sterling honesty, for such an undertaking as the transportation of such a tempting lure, and to be among the number chosen was "proof as strong as holy writ" that the man was looked upon by his fellows as the right one in the right place.

And so it was with Samuel J. Lowe in all his business transactions, whether public or private. If as Justice of the Peace he ever erred in giving judgment, the fault arose not from a want of determination to do right at what ever cost—no matter who was to be mulcted, but from a failure to comprehend the intricate manipulation of keen-witted law-

yers, the wilful perversion of evidence, the almost impossibility to draw the line of demarkation between truth and falsehood. But he never was blinded by gold. Had he been, he would have died a richer man—have left perchance a more towering marble above his grave, but a less shining record upon it.

At the time he was Sheriff the office was the reverse of a bed of roses. It was not a very lucrative one—the jail was an old log building—eternal vigilance was truly the price of the safety of the prisoners—the city had police that were little better than a farce—was a chosen refuge for scamps—rail-roads were in their infancy—the State Prison was at Alton, and sentenced men had to be taken thither by stage, with daring confederates watchful and ever ready to aid them to escape, even at the cost of bloodshed; the journey was long—the roads (spring and fall) muddy, running through a sparsely settled country, and the price for their transportation did not admit a plethora of guards. But the record of Samuel J. Lowe challenges the assertion that he did not ever-faithfully keep watch and ward—that he failed to safely deliver, within the grim walls of Alton, every one entrusted to his care.

The starting of a lot of prisoners for State's Prison, as then manipulated, would be a curiosity in the Garden City now. Nearly opposite the jail (on Randolph Street, between Clark and LaSalle) stood the old, smoke and dirt begrimed shop of "Jake Lower, Blacksmith." (I give the name from memory and spell it phonetically, and may be wrong in both, though I think not.) When the time came for departure, the stages of Frink and Walker were drawn up before the apology for a prison, the doomed men brought out handcuffed and with heavy shackles upon their ancles. Then "Jake" appeared upon the scene and *rivettted* a bar of iron from one of the double fastenings to the other, and the men were bundled into the stage and whirled away to punishment under the care of keepers, the crack-

ing of the driver's whip and the shouts and cheers of the gamins.

In this connection, I might add that his official duty forced him to be present at and take part in the execution of John Stone for the murder of Mrs. Thompson (July 10, 1840), and, that, though the circumstances were particularly atrocious—the doom a just one—the culprit hardened and ribald—yet the inner heart of Mr. Lowe would gladly have turned him aside from seeing the death agony, even while his high sense of duty led to unflinchingly stand upon the scaffold.

The love of his adopted country was very strong in Mr. Lowe. It was shadowed forth during the Mexican war, and had he lived at the time of the "late unpleasantness" he would have thrown all his influence into the scale for the Union, and given liberally of his means. At one time (in the City of New York) I believe he was a member of a military organization, and his tastes ran strongly in that direction.

Circumstances that could not be avoided, duties and family cares that must ever be paramount in the heart of any true man, kept him from following the bent of his inclination, and going to the Mexican war. But he could compensate for his absence by giving of his children, and there was no mawkish sensibility about his so doing. Two at least of them burned to "revel in the halls of the Montezumas," and he bade them go and furnished the means for horses and all "the pomp and glory of war."

"But," said one, "in case our army should be beaten, driven back, and we forced to retreat, what then?"

"Then," was the reply, and, though jokingly uttered, intended in all its soundness, "then, if you come to Chicago, ride through it as fast as you can run your horse, and don't ever stop where I will see you again!"

And such words were not idle from his lips. With Jackson, I take it, he would have indeed stood as a "stone

wall"—with his countrymen at Waterloo, he would have been among the last Wellington would ever have been called to blush for.

I have spoken of his being a man of nerve, firmness, and coolness, and am confident he would have walked to the scaffold rather than given up a principle. Though far from being an athlete—not being above the medium size, and ungifted with any remarkable physical power, yet he never shrank from an encounter, if necessary, and in more than one instance, to my knowledge, arrested breakers of the law who had "whipped out" and defied others. This his own self-command and the rare faculty of controlling and intimidating others enabled him to do, and looking back through the data of memory, I fail to find a single instance where he resorted to weapons, though the necessities of his situation sometimes made it obligatory upon him to carry them. Indeed, I remember to have frequently heard him speak scornfully of others who did so and made a boast of it, and no more humane man in the treatment of prisoners could have been found, even while exercising all of firmness and permitting nothing "but what the law allowed and the court adjudged."

Of these things peculiar family associations, and the *entrée* of his house at all times and at all hours gave me a better opportunity than another to judge, for Mr. Lowe was a modest, reticent man, quiet in his speech and manner, and I never heard anything boastful fall from his lips. To know him, one must have been with him—to have read his character aright, have watched the details of his actions, and sought the mainspring of his motives—have looked at that which was hidden rather than at that which was revealed. Perhaps—and there are many who so judge of men—his penmanship was a true index to his character. It was rather stiff than graceful—precise to Quakerism—neat to a fault and legible as the cleanest cut type—was, as might be said, without a blot—was in perfect keeping with

the man. To compare it with the fashionable handwriting of the present would be to compare the beautiful Roman simplicity of these pages with the fanciful fonts that are elaborated almost to unintelligibility—and, if anything Mr. Lowe detested, it was “flourish.”

In the circle of his associates Mr. Lowe was noted for his hospitality. A courteous and genial welcome met all who visited him, and though naturally somewhat retiring, yet when business cares were thrown aside there were few more companionable men to be found. He was a member of the Masonic fraternity, and was always a welcome guest at the St. George and Yorkshire dinners. He was a regular attendant, if not a member, of the Episcopal Church.

Death came in the midst of his usefulness, and while he was still a young man—came at a time when he could but illy be spared by his family—came in a terribly painful manner. He bore all patiently and bravely, and left behind a name that will be remembered and honored.

Save his own immediate family no one saw his eyes close, save Darius Knights and myself. It was a trying, terribly painful scene. His disease was said to have been the same as that of Napoleon, and the “Hero of St. Helena” could not have more bravely faced the Destroyer, and, as far as mortal eyes could judge, with a more trustful heart and firm belief that for his soul the golden gates were already ajar.

May we sleep as well when for us the summons comes.



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